

POLITICS AND POLITICAL PARTIES IN JAPAN

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POLITICS AND POLITICAL PARTIES IN JAPAN

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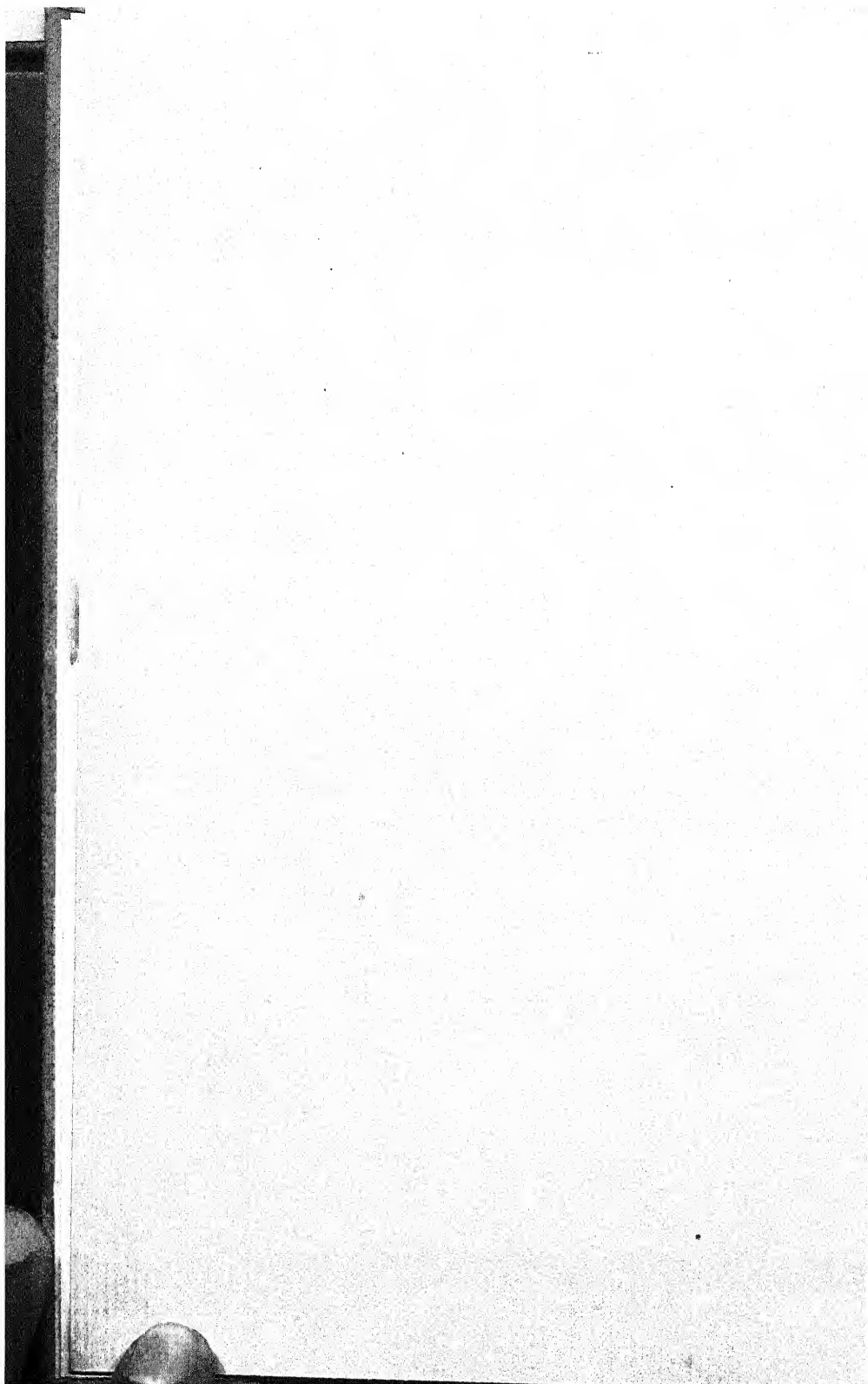
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MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE JAPANESE POLITICAL PARTIES

Japanese political parties in their modern form date from the years immediately following 1868, when the government of the Shogunate, or military regency, after a control extending over seven hundred years, collapsed, and the present Imperial régime was formally reinstated. Nevertheless, political parties of a sort had long existed; for Japan was no exception to the well-established historical fact that, as soon as any group of human beings enters on a political existence, factions or parties will arise contending for supremacy. In the earliest historical period of Japanese history there were the two rival clans of Soga and Mononobé, and, later, of Fujiwara and Tachibana. Then, following the collapse of the aristocratic rule of the Fujiwaras, two military factions made their appearance, the Tairas and the Minamotos, the latter of whom initiated that system of military government which continued right down to the Restoration of 1868. Yet the struggles of these powerful medieval clans for supremacy throw little light on the main characteristics of the present day political parties in Japan. For they were confined strictly to the rivalry between one ruling class and another. There was nothing of the *vox populi* contending against authority in the politics of those days; whereas the modern political parties came on the scene, we may say speaking generally, in the shape of the open revolt of the governed and oppressed against the governing or ruling classes, and have grown with the introduction and development of capitalistic ideas and liberal and constitutional principles in her modern national life.

The rising tide of popular dissatisfaction with the ruling classes was clearly discerned by the Emperor Meiji in his famous Charter Oath dated March 14, 1867, by which the foundation of a constitutional form of government was firmly laid, and the birth of political parties was, as it were, assured. The instrument, testifying to the Great Emperor's recognition of political parties, reads:

An assembly, widely convoked, shall be established, and thus great stress shall be laid upon public opinion;
The welfare of the whole nation shall be promoted by the everlasting efforts of both the governing and the governed classes;

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All subjects, civil and military officers as well as other people, shall do their best, and never grow weary in accomplishing their legitimate purposes ;

All absurd usages shall be abandoned, justice and righteousness shall regulate all actions ;

Knowledge shall be sought for all over the world, and thus shall be strengthened the foundations of the Imperial Polity.

By this Magna Charta of Japan, voluntarily granted by the Emperor, the guiding spirit of the Restoration was made manifest to the nation and to the world. It is the fountain head from which sprang modern political thought in the country. The Constitution promulgated in 1890 derived its inspiration from this Charter Oath.

While, however, as we have already stated, Japan's party government originated with the issuance of the Charter Oath, an insight into the underlying forces, political and otherwise, that had led to the collapse of the Tokugawa feudal government after three centuries of power, shows that there was nothing extraordinary or incongruous in the fact that those excellent subjects of the Emperor who had established the new régime soon ranged themselves into two opposite camps ; those who stressed civil government and espoused progressive ideas and those others who were militarists and conservative in their political leanings. Their opposition found open expression in 1873 on the so-called Korean expedition issue, by which is meant the proposed reprisals against Korea's contemptuous treatment of Japan's overtures to renew, under the new Imperial régime, the old-established intercourse between the two countries. On this issue such leading figures in both services of the new Administration as Sanetomi Sanjo, Takamori Saigo, Taisuké Itagaki, Shojiro Goto, Taneomi Soyéjima and Shimpei Eto were in favour of aggression, while Tomomi Iwakura, Takayoshi Kido, Toshimichi Ohkubo, Shigenobu Ohkuma, Takato Ohki and Hirobumi Ito took the side of reserve and caution. When the former found they could not carry the day, they resigned *en bloc*, and Saigo and Eto returned to their native provinces where they gathered about them many young ardent spirits sympathizing with their dissatisfaction against their onetime comrades who had remained in power, and awaited an opportunity to rise up against them. The following year saw open revolts launched by Eto at Saga and by Saigo at Satsuma, to be eventually quelled by the Meiji (Enlightened) Government, for that was the name adopted for the era marking the inauguration of the new Imperial régime. Other minor revolts were engineered to turn popular

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sentiment against the new government, namely by Issei Mayebara at Hagi and by the Shimpuren (Party of the Divine Wind) at Kumamoto, but these also ended in quick failures.

Taisuké Itagaki, another one in favour of a Korean expedition, who had resigned from the high post of Sangi, or State Councillor, was suspected of being a confederate of Saigo because of his former association, but he was astute enough to see that neither conditions at home nor our foreign relations any longer permitted recourse to arms for the acquisition of political power, but rather, that the people at large must be appealed to and depended on for this purpose. Accordingly, he embarked on a popular movement, of which the Aikoku Koto (Patriotic Public Party) was the first expression, which was later reorganized under the name of the Jiyuto (Liberal Party) and finally under that of the Seiyukai (Political Friends' Party).

In 1881 Shigenobu Ohkuma (later Marquis), who was ousted from the Government for his alleged attempt at prematurely introducing the English type of representative government, thought the time now opportune for organizing a political party in opposition to Itagaki's party. So he ushered in the Kaishinto, or Reform Party, which was the forerunner of the present Minseito, or Popular Government Party.

These two parties, which owe their inception to the desire of Itagaki and Ohkuma, along with their respective associates, to advance their political views by winning the masses over to their side in opposition to the bureaucrats of the time with their clannish and militaristic tendencies, actually reflected the popular reaction, fostered by the then prevailing liberal principles, against such tendencies. Along with this political reason for carrying on these parties, i.e. to cause the popular will to be mirrored upon the government of the country, another factor contributed to their advance, namely, the growing need of the new capitalistic order to further its economic development. In the feudal period, all power rested with the privileged class of nobles, the pedigreed aristocrats and their military subjects (samurai), while the majority of the people had been compelled to submit absolutely to this class, whose despotic administration had little regard for the conditions in which they lived. The ruling class, whenever they found themselves in financial difficulties, tried to make both ends meet by having recourse to exactions and forfeitures. But the time arrived long before the Restoration when they could no longer resort to this handy method for restoring their own finances at the expense of the lower orders, and when in fact the feudal social structure was in imminent danger of total collapse. What

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active part was played by the hitherto maltreated merchant classes in accelerating the downfall of the feudal system is well understood by those conversant with the inside history of the time. Prodigious was the economic advance of this newly arisen class of traders, the nucleus of capitalism in this country, and the privileged class had to realize that they were becoming more and more powerless before it. This capitalist class, which in its earlier stages led a parasitic existence in the political field and was watching for an opportunity to grasp the power which they considered rightly their own, found such an opportunity presented to them by the success of the movement for popular government, which resulted in the establishment of a constitutional government allowing the will of the people to be expressed through a parliament. The Japanese capitalist interests now began to take an active part in the organization of political parties, through whose operations they intended to achieve their economic expansion. It was but natural that they should desire to ensure their economic freedom through the instrumentality of political parties based on belief in the power of the majority in parliament to follow any course of action on which it should decide. Thus, between the capitalist class and the political parties, whose formation was no less necessary from the standpoint of the newly arisen industrialists than that of the politicians interested in affairs of State, there arose a state of interdependence which eventually made the political parties appear subservient to the demands of industry or moved to action at the command of capitalism. No party platform that ran contrary to the aims of capitalism could now be advanced, and the sole mission of the parties appeared to be nothing more nor less than to further the aims and interests of industry. It was not, however, long before the capitalist class found itself heading for collapse as a result of the over expansion of its productive capacity and the saturation of the market with its products. Its influence gradually waned as the necessity for its reorganization began to be noised abroad, and the stage was prepared for State control. And this led inevitably to the decay of the political parties.

While yet the Minseito and the Seiyukai, the present leading political parties in Japan, were contending with each other for power and seeking co-operation with the capitalist interests, there came on the stage a new party that bade defiance to "pre-existing parties" (to borrow the phraseology of the new party). In the same manner as the plebians in the past revolted against the feudal military government, the new proletariat now began to assert itself against the capitalist

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class—making one realize the truth of the old saying that history repeats itself.

The political parties in Japan, from their very birth down to these days of their decline, have continued their strife for power with a singleness of purpose that commands respect, allowing themselves, however, to seek alliance with the bureaucrats or to render yeoman service to the clannish statesmen in their attempt to come by power by the shortest possible cut; little aware, apparently, that in so doing they were betraying the prime object of a political party, namely, that of promoting the welfare of the nation by following certain principles adopted by the common consent of their members. Thus have they proved themselves untrue to the real wishes and aspirations of the people at large. The parties which have thus failed to establish and carry out political ideas based on the popular will, and have failed to realize the *raison d'être* of representative government, have fallen, we might almost say deservedly, into their present decay. In cynical contrast to the sad fate of the older parties, the new proletariat party, with the masses for its background and forswearing all allegiance with the privileged classes, has now attained the position of the third party in this country, thus testifying to the fact that a party that is faithful to its legitimate mission is certain of winning popular support in this country. The fact that the "fascist" candidates who have appeared in recent elections are very few in number, is a sure sign of their unpopularity, and disproves the idea that political parties in Japan are doomed. In a word, the failure of the existing major parties is due to the absence of men of the right calibre to regain popular confidence, and also to the weakness of their party organization. The general view is that before party government can be reinstituted, the existing parties must renew and re-organize themselves.

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It is proposed here to narrate the history of political parties in Japan under the heads of their infancy, their struggles with the bureaucrats, their period of mature development, and their final decline.

Their infancy may be said to extend from the early years of the Meiji Era (beginning with 1868), marked by the birth of the Aikoku Koto in 1874 to the promulgation of the present Constitution in 1889. The progressive and the liberal parties were organized in this period, but since the Diet was not yet in existence their activities were essentially extra-mural, and limited to preparations for the coming of representative government.

As stated before, the first political party in Japan in the modern sense was established by Taisuké Itagaki, one of the veteran founders of the new Imperial régime, who, on finding his advocacy of a strong attitude toward Korea foiled by more powerful members of the State Council, decided to resort to a popular movement for the execution of his aim, and as a means to that end organized a political party to unite all those who shared his political views. This party went by the name of Aikoku Koto, or Patriotic Public Party. The members discussed the evils of the time and made public the remedial measures they would adopt if they were permitted to participate in the administration. (Since Itagaki, even while he held a seat in the Government, had argued the urgent necessity of establishing "a council of state elected by the people," the platform of his new party centred around this object. In January, 1874, he, together with his associates on the Korean issue, Kimimasa Yuri, Shinobu Komuro, Kenzaburo Okamoto, Shigeru Furusawa, Yuzo Hayashi and Kenkichi Kataoka, filed a petition with the Government for the establishment of a popular council.) This pronouncement of the party as such embodies the first practical step toward the realization of its avowed object, being couched in language that glorifies the opening page of its history and shows with what fervour and spirit the liberal movement in this country made its first appearance. (The petitioners declared that "the political power rested neither with the Throne nor the people at large, but with the officials in high positions, who issued multifarious decrees in the morning only to be rescinded in the evening," who "allowed their civil and judicial administration to be tainted by favouritism and who lent deaf ears to the expressions of popular grievances;" that "the impossibility of securing

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the tranquillity of the realm in this manner was patent even to a juvenile intelligence;" and that "the procrastination of those in authority was certain to lead to the collapse of the State." In the opinion of the petitioners, whose "sense of patriotism impelled them to seek an effective means of saving the situation, such means lay in enabling public opinion to be expressed freely and to that end to establish a deliberative body elected by the free will of the people," which "would serve to restrict the power of the high authorities and ensure the happiness of the whole community." "It is a universal truth that the people who pay the taxes have the right to participate in, and to criticize, the affairs of the Government." To the objection raised to the establishment of a parliament on the ground of the Japanese people's want of knowledge, which disqualifies them to be classed as a civilized nation, the petitioners would reply that "if that was really the case, the way to make the people well informed and civilized in the shortest possible time was to establish a parliament." The full enjoyment of civic rights and their participation in the "joys and sorrows of the State" were the prerequisites for the people's acquirement of a civilized status. Further, a strong country was possible only under a strong government which must presuppose a perfect community of interests between itself and the people it professes to govern, which was unattainable except through the medium of a parliament. The document was brought to a close by copious quotations from the political histories of Europe and America.

This pronouncement appearing as it did at the time when popular attention was focussed upon the movement of the ex-Ministers who had been foiled in their attempt to force the Korean issue, created a tremendous sensation throughout the country.

The abortive insurrection raised by Shimpei Eto, one of the ex-Ministers, in his native province, Saga, in February the same year, was a heavy blow to the parliamentary movement, of which he was an influential supporter. Eto indeed had gone to Saga with the intention of quenching the smouldering disturbance created by the political malcontents there, only to find himself eventually enmeshed in it.

(The direct motive of this parliamentary movement was to destroy the clannish government personified by Toshimichi Ohkubo, who had come out victorious in the Korean issue, and to enable the political power to be handed over to the people. The indirect cause accounting for it may be rightly ascribed to the introduction to Japan, at this time, of democratic principles, embodied in Rousseau's *Contrat Social*, Bentham's utilitarian philosophy and Mill's essay *On Liberty*;

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and to the practical illustration of the French Revolution, as well as to the strong popular inclination toward a constitutional government of the English type.

Opposed to these liberals and progressivists of the time there was a party holding conservative and pure nationalistic convictions, who were favourably disposed toward the German school of political philosophy, and who combined with the nationalist believers in the divine right of the Emperor to present a hostile attitude toward the liberals. While these two groups were carrying on spirited disputes, the attempted assassination of Iwakura, a Minister of State, by certain youthful spirits of the Aikoku Koto, served to intensify the Government's pressure upon the champions of the parliamentary system; while the situation was further complicated by the movement among the militarists to send an expedition to Formosa to avenge the massacre of shipwrecked Japanese by the islanders, for which the Peking Government had disclaimed all responsibility on the ground that the island lay beyond the reach of their administrative authority. Itagaki who was at this juncture perplexed as to whether to continue to wage war against the Government or to effect a compromise by withdrawing from public life, chose the latter alternative and dissolving the Aikoku Koto in March, 1874, returned to his native province, Tosa. It is only fair to remark here that Itagaki, by organizing the Aikoku Koto and identifying himself with the movement to establish a popular assembly, not only gave the discontented seceders from the Government an opportunity to make themselves prominent political figures, but induced the people at large, who till then had practically no concern for their political status and the government of the country, to advance their claims for individual rights and liberty and to pass judgment upon the merits and demerits of whatever administration was in power. Itagaki thus played a most conspicuous part in ensuring the establishment of constitutional government in this country.

Returning to his native province, Itagaki organized a new party, the Risshisha, with virtually the same platform as the Aikoku Koto, and within the party an institution for the study of jurisprudence through the medium of European books. It is recorded of this party that it made a translation of the French revolutionary song and broadcast it about the streets and otherwise devoted its energies to promoting the so-called "cause of liberty and civil rights." Many of the political clubs in other provinces soon came under the aegis of Itagaki, while his more ardent followers christened Tosa as the "Jerusalem of popular right."

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Apart from Ohkubo and Ito, there were, among the other Ministers of State, Takayoshi Kido and other enthusiasts for popular government who had actually proposed the establishment of a constitutional government even before the petition for a popular assembly had been organized and presented. When they saw this latter movement making headway and the political atmosphere showing signs of unrest, they attempted in May, 1874, by way of appeasing the popular sentiment against the then Government, to convoke, as a step preparatory to establishing such assembly, an annual conference of the local governors to which to refer in the meantime matters of urgent national interest.

Ohkubo and certain other Ministers, who favoured the idea of sending an expeditionary force to Formosa to divert popular attention abroad, refused to entertain this suggestion of Kido's, who immediately resigned. Admiral Tsugumichi Saigo lost no time in leading the punitive force against the Formosans to victory and returned home in December. Ohkubo, despatched as Ambassador to the Court of Peking, concluded the negotiations for peace in a manner that raised him to a towering eminence above his colleagues and so added greatly to the influences making for arbitrary government at home. Nevertheless the expedition itself and the result of the peace parley with the Chinese authorities were little calculated to enhance the prestige of the Government, but rather tended to stir popular agitation against it.

(In January the following year, the remaining members of the now dissolved party of Aikoku Koto, acting in conjunction with the Risshisha at Tosa, sent circulars all over the country and called in Osaka a huge assemblage of men sharing their political views. The result was that a great new party, named the Aikokusha, or Patriotic League, was forthwith organized with the avowed object of playing a momentous part in the politics of the country.)

(By this time Ohkubo had acquiesced in the advice of Hirobumi Ito and Kaoru Inouyé to reach a compromise with Kido and Itagaki before their antagonism should take a turn inimical to the best interests of the State, and the memorable Osaka Conference of these founders of the new Government which took place that same January resulted in the formation of what would now be called a national Government, with Kido and Itagaki joining hands with their old comrades albeit recent political opponents.) The Aikokusha, which had derived its inspiration from Itagaki, was now doomed to a natural dissolution.

(The Imperial Rescript issued on the formation of this "national" Government makes a retrospective reference to the five articles of the

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Imperial Oath taken on the Emperor's ascension to the Throne and, after ascribing the "small measure of tranquillity" prevailing since then to the spiritual influence of the Imperial Ancestors and the loyal efforts of his subjects, stresses that "the numerous departments of domestic administration require extension and renovation." It is therefore proposed, the rescript goes on to say, to establish a Senate which "will be the mainspring of legislation" and a Supreme Court "which council will solidify the right of judgment" and to convoke a conference of the local governors thereby to make the condition of the people at large better known and to promote public utilities, all of which measures are dictated by the Imperial desire "to introduce by degrees a constitutional form of government and to enjoy the advantage thereof with you, Our subjects," who are therefore to be admonished neither to remain "steeped in the old" nor prove "overhasty in advancing forward." With the establishment of the Senate and the Supreme Court in April, 1875, to take the place of their predecessors, the Left and Right Boards, together with the opening of the prefectural governors' conference in June following, the Government, now reinforced by the admission of Kido and Itagaki as State Councillors, was apparently saved from the precarious position in which it had found itself before. The liberals and popular rightists were more or less discomfited by this turn of events, but, at least, they had the satisfaction of knowing that part of the objects they had set before them was being realized.

(Itagaki's entry into the cabinet apparently added to its strength, but it was not long before he, as the protagonist of the popular franchise movement in the country, stressed the propriety of constituting the Senate as an independent legislative body, and declared that a Sangi (State Councillor) was arrogating excessive power to himself by discharging concurrently the functions of a Minister of an administrative department. This apparent "disunity of opinion among the cabinet members" ended with the resignation of Itagaki, Kido and Shimazu, but no sooner had they left their ministerial posts than the Government relapsed to their old conservative, clannish attitude and pressed hard upon the popular party, which, however, acquired strength in direct proportion to the governmental pressure applied against it. This resulted in the insurrection (1876) of the Shimpuren (a band of nationalist shizoku, or feudal retainers of the old régime, in Kumamoto Prefecture) and the Southwestern Rebellion (1877) led by Takamori Saigo. (The popular rightists, centring round the Risshisha society of Tosa Province, took this occasion to present to the Throne a petition,

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drawn up in the name of Kenkichi Kataoka, supplicating (1) that the evils of arbitrary government be exterminated and the demands of public opinion be adhered to, (2) that the separation of the State services into legislative, executive and judicial be confirmed, and (3) that the rights and privileges of all classes of the Japanese people be equalized; and, furthermore, pointing out the maladministration of the Government then in power. The discovery at this time of the abortive attempt made by Itagaki's partisans to overthrow the Government in collusion with Munemitsu Mutsu, who was then Secretary of the Senate, and their eventual imprisonment (1878) intensified the Government's hostile attitude toward Itagaki.)

Itagaki was planning to re-establish the Aikokusha (Patriotic League) in concert with his supporters who had gathered around him, when in May, 1878, Ichiro Shimada and his gang made a fatal attempt on the life of Toshimichi Ohkubo, the then Minister of Home Affairs, and the veritable pillar of the Meiji Government, whom they accused of "having obstructed the expression of public opinion, repressed popular rights, confounded public administration with affairs of private concern, and conducted the country's foreign policy in such a blundering way as to diminish her prestige." (The suspicion was aroused that the murderers were a party of the Risshisha members who were on intimate terms with Itagaki, and a vociferous outcry was raised against them as infamous traitors.) In the midst of this turmoil the first convention of the Aikokusha was held in Osaka in September the same year. The time being one of reaction against freedom of speech that had flourished not long before, the Government went to the utmost extremes in restricting public speech and political associations.) Nevertheless political associations sprang up all over the country, and stimulated by the resurgence of the Aikokusha, joined *en masse* the movement for the opening of a parliament. This, it may be remarked in advance, accelerated the arrival of the time propitious to the issue of the Imperial Decree for the opening of the Diet in 1890.

(At the fourth convention of the Aikokusha held in 1880 the league was re-named Kokkai Kisei Domeikai,) or League for Ensuring the Establishment of Parliament; and as a practical step toward the attainment of their object Hironaka Kono and Kenkichi Kataoka, supported by over one hundred thousand signatories in twenty-four prefectures, including Tokyo and Osaka, (sent in a petition for the establishment of a parliament.) The Government's frantic attempt to suppress this movement had the contrary effect of inflaming it; and

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the Government, bewildered by this result, resumed their enquiring into the constitutional systems of foreign countries which had been held in abeyance for some time past.) On October 12, 1881, was promulgated the historic Imperial Decree ordering that a parliament should be opened in this country in 1890. This memorable event was preceded by the so-called "1890 disruption," revealing disagreement between the then two most prominent members of the Government, Hirobumi Ito and Shigenobu Ohkuma, and the consequent resignation of the latter. The Ministers and their following who remained with the Government were Satsuma and Choshu clansmen, while those who took sides with Ohkuma mostly hailed from the Tosa and Hizen clans. (It meant a dislocation in the personnel of the Government as serious as that which occurred at the time when the question of sending an expedition to Korea was mooted. By this time the conviction was fast gaining ground that to counteract a government in power there was no effective means left except by organizing a political party or parties. The "League for Ensuring the Establishment of Parliament" had outlived its necessity, and the time was most appropriate for the Tosa group of politicians to organize a political party, that was to be christened the Jiyuto, or Liberal Party. (On October 29, 1881, Taisuké Itagaki and Nobuyuki Nakajima, President and Vice-President of the party, with other officers, drew up the articles of the party's faith, beginning with the now famous paragraph reading as follows :)

Liberty is man's natural heritage ; to preserve it is his imperative duty. However, it is often repressed and stifled at the hand of artificial power which makes it impossible for him to enjoy to the full his priceless possessions of life and property, . . . which are left to the tender mercy of the rulers. This is a condition of things, as perilous as treading on thin ice . . . Therefore it behoves us to organize a Liberal Party and to develop a spirit of co-operation among ourselves, so that we may develop our heaven-born liberty against the oppression of artificial power and cultivate a spirit of self-government.)

This was a decidedly radical pronouncement for the time it was issued.

(The Jiyuto,) it may be as well to state here in advance, (was acting contrary to the very purpose to which it had sworn itself,) when later (being then merged in the Seiyukai, a party of moderate principles sponsored by Prince Ito) it opposed the introduction of manhood suffrage into this country.) Simultaneously with the birth of the Jiyuto, the Rikken Seito, or Constitutional Party, was established in Osaka and

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the Kyushu Kaishinto, or Reform Party of Kyushu, in the southern island, both being local branches of the Jiyuto.)

As a counterpoise to the Jiyuto founded by Itagaki, the Rikken Kaishinto, or Constitutional Reform Party, was established on March 14, 1872, by Shigenobu Ohkuma of the Hizen clan, who had resigned his ministerial post in consequence of the "1890 disruption" and who was now convinced that the only means left to him of carrying out his long-cherished political ideas was to organize a party for that purpose. Among his counsellors and supporters in this enterprize, Ohkuma counted Togama Kono, Harufusa Kitabataké, Mitsu Mayejima and other officials who had left the Government service *en bloc* with him and several eminent disciples of Yukichi Fukuzawa of Keio School fame, Tsuyoshi Inukai and Yukio Ozaki among others. The then existing political associations, Ohmeisha, Toyo Giseikai and Ohtokai, also formed part of the constituent elements of the new party. The manifesto reads :

Happiness is the object of human seeking, but this party is averse to happiness enjoyed by the exclusive few, for it is selfish in its nature and cannot coexist with the dignity and prosperity of the Imperial Household and the well-being of the people at large which is desired by our party.

This is at variance with the broad claims advanced by the Jiyuto. The manifesto further states :

Yet any radical change is not our desire, for a sudden alteration of an institution effected without regard for the proper stages to be observed in such a movement is certain to derange the social order and is detrimental to good government.

One cannot help wondering at the great difference between the principles advocated by the original founders of the two major political parties in this country and the actual positions taken by their latter-day representatives, when it is remembered that the Jiyuto is the progenitor of the present Seiyukai (Political Friends' Party to be referred to later) as the Rikken Kaishinto is that of the present Minseito (Popular Government Party.)

Another party styling itself the Rikken Teiseito, or Constitutional Imperial Government Party, with Genichiro Fukuchi for its leader, made its appearance at this time. It upheld conservatism in opposition to the liberalism professed by the Jiyuto and the Kaishinto, and sang the praises of the clannish, bureaucratic government of the time. Its life as the watchdog of the Government, however, came to an early end.

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As the two parties on the liberal side were making vigorous appeals for popular support, Fukuchi and his party utilized their organ, one of the few papers published at the time, in launching fierce attacks against their opponents, with one notable consequence that, in March, 1882, Itagaki who was then touring in Gifu City was stabbed by a would-be assassin, Aihara. The famous remark uttered by the great liberal as he lay wounded, "Itagaki may die, but liberty never," poured oil on the flames of his followers' ardour.

The Government, at a loss to handle the serious situation (particularly with Hirobumi Ito away in Europe charged with the task of investigating the constitutional systems of the West), altered the laws governing associations in order to acquire the necessary power to apply the utmost pressure against the major parties and local associations of a political nature. The result was a crop of bloody encounters between party members and the minions of the law. Ito, on returning from abroad, embarked upon a blood and iron policy of the Bismarckian type and brought pressure to bear upon even the imperialist Teiseito. In October, 1884, the liberal Jiyuto was dissolved; and with its leader Ohkuma's forced desertion in December the same year, the Kaishinto's influence collapsed. Ito's strategic victory in inducing Ohkuma to accept the post of Foreign Minister in his cabinet left Ohkuma's recent party followers dumbstruck. Further, when the remnants of the Jiyuto, the Kaishinto and the Teiseito organized themselves into a Daido Danketsu (or union of political thinkers agreeing on the major questions of policy) and set about staging a vigorous opposition to the Government, Ito caused the Peace Preservation Regulations to be enacted, by which *coup d'état* the political agitators of varying shades of opinion were expelled to distances of over three *ri* (about 7.7 miles) from Tokyo.)

The Daido Danketsu became extinct in March, 1889, when its leader, Goto, was appointed Minister of Communications. This closely followed the promulgation on February 11 of the same year (which day marks the festival in honour of the ascension of the first Emperor Jimmu) of the Constitution of the Empire of Japan, to the infinite joy and exhilaration of all party members who had been longing for so many years, even at the cost of bloodshed, to see such occasion realized in this country.)

Thus ended the infancy of the political parties in Japan. In the beginning, the political consciousness of the Japanese people was still undeveloped and the Government looked upon political parties

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in the light of seditionaries. Yet constitutionalism having once taken root in this country has defied all obstacles in the path of its persistent growth, and for this result every credit is due to the fervent efforts of the popular rightist movement.

The influence of modern capitalism became discernible as early as during this period, as witness the relations that existed between the then Minister of Finance Ohkuma and the Mitsubishi interests in connection with the requisitioning of the latter's ships for the Formosan expedition of 1874. The close relationship between Ohkuma and Mitsubishi and between the Kaishinto and Mitsubishi continued unabated till a few years ago, and, though not directly bearing upon the destiny of the political parties as such, was responsible in a measure for the "1881 disruption." The offer and acceptance of business transactions between the influential members of the Government and the merchant princes, as exemplified by the sale of the Government property in Hokkaido without recourse to competitive bidding, forms a noteworthy example of the advance of capitalism in the political sphere.

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This period extends over nearly twenty-five years, beginning with the first session of the Diet in 1889 and closing with the fall of the third Katsura Cabinet in 1913. It witnessed the birth of three purely party cabinets, Ohkuma-Itagaki's (a coalition between the progressives and the liberals led respectively by the two statesmen named), Ito's and Saionji's. Yet none of the parties could claim to be exercising political leadership, in the true sense of the word, for each party cabinet was replaced very shortly after it came to power by a statesman or statesmen of clannish or bureaucratic or military convictions. The day was yet far off when political parties could feel any great satisfaction with themselves.

How the political parties of this time were molested and harassed by either one of the above-mentioned clannish and militaristic cliques could be very easily imagined. Although it cannot be denied that within each party could be found one or two who sought alliance with the bureaucrats and thus sowed the seeds of its ultimate fall or impotence, nevertheless the attitude assumed by those who had the real power toward the infant parties that had, so to speak, just crawled out of their cradles was one of extreme violence. (That the Hayashi Cabinet of our own days did not dare to dissolve the Diet for a second time justifies the conclusion that the Japanese political parties, although in a decadent condition for some time past, can still command a higher degree of respect today even from the military than in the early period of our constitutional government, when it was not an uncommon practice for a government to dissolve the Diet twice within its tenure of office or even twice in the same year.) It is painful to recount what bitter pills the political parties of those days were compelled to swallow. The present two major parties, the Seiyukai (Political Friends' Party) and the Minseito (Popular Government Party) have outlived their respective periods of hardship and trial, but only by adapting themselves to the circumstances prevailing at the different stages of their history. This is shown by the various names each party has assumed since its inception, namely, the Seiyukai being originally the Jiyuto (Liberal Party) and later the Kenseito (Constitutional Party); while the Minseito has borne the names of Kaishinto (Reform Party), Shimpoto (Progressive Party), Kokuminto (National Party), Doshikai (Society of Politician Friends) and Kenseikai (Constitutional Party). Each of these names is reminiscent of the dis-

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persion or reunion of the members of one party, or of one party with those of another, caused by the necessity for coping with the non-party power that existed at each period. We will now follow the vicissitudes of each party or the progress of its struggle with the clannish, bureaucratic influences.

The Jiyuto, after it was dissolved for the first time in 1884, was reorganized in November, 1890, embracing within it all opposition parties, except the Kaishinto. While the Kaishinto returned 46 members to the Lower House, the Jiyuto commanded a majority of 130 in a full house of a little over 300. (The Government had an extreme fear of the Diet and regarded the representatives as so many brigands. Premier Yamagata (later Marshal), while professing non-partisanship, organized a governmental party of 129, with the bureaucrats as its centre, around which were assembled neutrals and independents. The two opposition parties, the Jiyuto and the Kaishinto, failed to keep together in voting for the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker, and lost the latter office to the government party.) This incident, trivial to a casual observer, is replete with weighty significance. On every subsequent occasion when the opposition parties were well advised to make common cause against their political enemy they failed to come to a perfect understanding, and played each for its own hand, allowing themselves to be baited by the bureaucrats ever watchful for the opportunity of driving a wedge into the occasional alliance achieved between the opposition ranks.) Thus it was that for scores of years hence the bureaucrats revelled in their wilful extravagances, and the nation grieved to see their rights trampled upon.

(At the first session (1890) of the Diet the opposition parties cut the budgetary expenditure of ¥80,000,000 by approximately ten per cent., the reason assigned for this retrenchment being that the financial capacity of the nation must be restored. Munemitsu Mutsu, Minister of Agriculture and Commerce, who was given the task of manipulating the Diet, effected a "compromise" with Itagaki, and, winning over to his side one section of the Jiyuto group in the Lower House, succeeded in passing the budget with a reduction of only ¥6,500,000 to the infinite relief of the bureaucratic dignitaries in power. This compromise was most ominous in the history of Japanese constitutional government, for it was the first, though remote, cause of the corruption and fall of the political parties in subsequent years.)

The next cabinet, led by Matsukata, regarded the Yamagata Cabinet's manipulation of the Diet as a sort of capitulation on the Govern-

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ment's part to the political parties, and it faced the second session with the firm determination to uphold the prestige of the bureaucrats. The opposition parties, the Jiyuto and the Kaishinto, made common issue on the Government's alleged failure to effect retrenchments, and, besides turning down several Government bills by way of expressing their want of confidence in the Government, reduced the budget by ¥7,900,000, whereupon the Government dissolved the Diet. The election that followed this first dissolution of the Diet was marked by the most reckless interference engineered by Home Minister Yajiro Shinagawa, which in its ferocity was at once "unprecedented and forbade repetition," the ensuing casualties numbering 25 dead and 388 wounded. The polling returns, however, declared the Opposition victorious. The entire nation demanded that the Government be taxed with their recent acts of interference, and even within the ranks of the Government there were audible demands for the resignation of the Home Minister, to which Ito, the then President of the Privy Council, added his own voice. The eventual supercession of Shinagawa, however, did not satisfy the House which voted a petition to the Throne, impeaching Premier Matsukata. Nothing daunted by this open declaration of public opinion against him, Matsukata indulged in overt utterances defying the Diet, which he put into practice by suspending the House for a week before it was closed. The opposition of the Elder Statesmen, however, on the ground of his contempt for public opinion, proved too strong for him to remain in office any longer.)

In these circumstances the second Ito Cabinet (the first having met the first session) faced the fourth session of the Diet, which, when taking up the budget for the 1893-94 year, demanded heavy reductions in naval and other expenditures; and, on finding the Government obdurate, addressed to the Throne an impeachment against it, while the Government on its side, requested an Imperial Decree for dissolving the House. (The Emperor Meiji would not listen to either party, but called to his presence all the Ministers of State, Privy Councillors and Presidents of both Houses and handed them a rescript, which impressed on them the conviction that they were by duty bound to observe faithfully the limitations of the functions of the Cabinet and the Diet, and to render service to the Throne by following the path of harmonious co-operation. The Government and the Jiyuto compromised and the fourth session was brought to a peaceful close. But this event sounded the death knell of the co-operative relationship between the Jiyuto and the Kaishinto, which could no longer be designated by

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the generic name of the popular parties.

The fifth session, opened in November, 1893, was signalized by the impeachment and expulsion of Speaker Toru Hoshi who, with Agriculture Minister Goto and his Vice-Minister, was charged with bribery in connection with the alteration of the stock exchange regulations. This forms the first instance of the public exposure of the corrupt relationship between a political party and the capitalist interests in this country. The opposition parties persisted in calling in question the uprightness of the two officials and further introduced a bill for making a representation to the Throne on the Government's failure to win the case where the Japanese man-of-war *Chishima* had collided with a British steamer. The Ito Cabinet, having found repeated suspensions ineffectual to stem this growing tide of opposition, eventually dissolved the House.

The third election, conducted under peaceful conditions, resulted in the signal victory of the Opposition. The Kaishinto and other parties severely attacked the Government for their unwarrantable dissolution of the previous Diet and, adopting for their slogan "a strong foreign policy" and "the establishment of a ministry responsible to the people," passed a resolution of non-confidence in the Government, which, however, remained passive and unmoved. Thereupon the Opposition passed by a large majority an address to the Throne blaming the Ito Cabinet for its "incapacity to discharge its functions properly as regards both the internal administration and the foreign affairs of the country," with the result that the House was again dissolved in June, 1894. Thus under the second Ito Cabinet two elections were held in the same year, in March and September, 1894.)

This year witnessed the outbreak of the (first) Sino-Japanese War and while it lasted the political sky of Japan remained cloudless, for the entire nation had devoted itself to the conduct of a foreign war.

(When the retrocession of the Liaotung Peninsula was followed by a tremendous outbreak of popular sentiment the clamour for a strong foreign policy revived, and the anti-Government movement gathered momentum.) Immediately on the opening of the ninth session the Opposition parties in a body introduced an address to the Throne impeaching the Government, to be turned down, however, through the compromise effected between the tactful leaders of the Jiyuto, Toru Hoshi, Yuzo Hayashi and Kunisuké Okazaki, and the Government representatives, Foreign Minister Mutsu and Chief Secretary of Cabinet Miyoji Ito. This was the immediate occasion for the formation of

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the Shimpoto (Progressives) by the advocates of "the strong foreign policy," which included the Kaishinto (Reformists), the Kakushinto (Reconstructionists), the Chugoku Shimpoto (Progressives of the Central Provinces), the Zaisei Kakushinkai (Financial Reformists), the Ohté Club, and the independents, in March, 1896. Later, Premier Ito, acting on Inouyé's suggestion, attempted to carry through his post-war administration by bringing Itagaki to his side, but, foiled in this scheme by the resignation, expressed or threatened, of Foreign Minister Mutsu and Finance Minister Watanabé, Ito approached Ohkuma for his assistance, but without avail on account of Itagaki's opposition. The "national government" as conceived by Inouyé failed to materialize and the second Ito Cabinet collapsed.)

(Thus was started the Government's repeated change of attitude towards the two parties of the Jiyuto and the Shimpoto, at one time rapprochement, at another antagonism, first with one and then with the other. But the real actors behind the scene were the bureaucratic statesmen manipulating the political parties, and the crafty elements within the parties bent on striking bargains with the bureaucratic statesmen.)

The second Matsukata Cabinet made a coalition with the Shimpoto to form the Matsukata-Ohkuma Cabinet, but it was not long before Matsukata, on finding the Shimpoto rebellious on account of his opposition to certain planks in the latter's platform, turned to the Jiyuto for a helping hand, but without success. The upshot was that Matsukata, finding his Government in imminent danger of a vote of non-confidence, dissolved the Diet, himself resigning the same day.

Ito's third cabinet which next appeared sought to secure the Jiyuto's assistance, but the attempted coalition fell through on account of Finance Minister Inouyé's opposition to the Jiyuto's demand for a portfolio for Itagaki. In consequence the bill for increased taxation, on which the Government "staked existence," was voted down by an overwhelming majority, and the Government fell back upon their customary resource, the dissolution of the House. This had the effect of cementing more strongly than ever the Jiyuto and the Shimpoto, which parties forthwith dissolved themselves to unite in a new body, the Kenseito (Constitutional Party). It is an indisputable fact that even at that time when such Elder Statesmen as Yamagata, Kuroda, Ohyama, Saigo (Tsugumichi), Ito and Inouyé were still flourishing, the conclusion was forcing itself upon the national consciousness that the political parties, after they had forsworn their allegiance to the

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bureaucratic cabinets, must of necessity be called upon to undertake the business of government ; except only for the possibility of any one or other of the Elder Statesmen choosing to set himself in opposition to such parties. These statesmen failed to signify at the particular period in question their readiness to apply themselves to the management of State affairs ; and so for the first time in the political history of Japan a party cabinet, based on a coalition between the parties led by Ohkuma and Itagaki, made its appearance on June 30, 1898. But it was doomed to enjoy a very short existence.)

Toru Hoshi, who was then Minister to the United States, returned from his overseas post without announcing the fact to the home authorities and tried in vain to secure a place for himself in the newly formed cabinet. His successful attempt at separating the Kenseito into two camps, one comprising the former Jiyuto members and the other the Shimpoto elements and styling themselves the Kensei Honto (Primary Constitutional Party), had a correspondingly disruptive effect upon the cabinet councils, and this compelled Ohkuma to send in his resignation on October 31. (Thus the political parties of the time stood convicted of their inability to come to power by their own unaided exertions, and for the thirty long years that followed they were obliged to give pledges to bureaucrats and militarists, and to seek a series of alliances and coalitions with them which always depressed and confused the political atmosphere, and spelt their eventual downfall.)

The next cabinet, the second Yamagata Cabinet, had for its motto "heartly co-operation," of which Toru Hoshi of the Kenseito and General Taro Katsura, War Minister, were the joint authors. But Yamagata's plan for increased taxation met with opposition even in the ranks of the Kenseito which was barely equal to the Kensei Honto in point of numbers. Thereupon the Government bought over to their side a few of the Kokumin Kyokai members to assure themselves of a working majority and induced the Kenseito intransigents to modify their party resolution against the tax increase in consideration of the five year limit to be attached to the bill. The Government "even dared commit the ignominious act" of offering a bait in the shape of increasing their annual fee as members from ¥800 to ¥2,000. After this, with the twelfth session over, the Yamagata Cabinet attempted to alter the rules governing the appointment of civil officers so as to check effectually the admission to the civil service of men with no qualification but their party connections and thereby to widen the bureaucrats'

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sphere of influence. When this was found to be distasteful to the Kenseito which had supported his cabinet in the previous session, Yamagata appeased their ire by "firing" four high officials with whom had originated the idea of "shutting out" party politicians. The thirteenth session closed without any mishap, with the Kenseito standing by the Government. When the Kenseito claimed to be largely recompensed for the services it had rendered his cabinet, Yamagata, who had now carried through his major policies, flatly rejected the demand; and, declaring himself completely divorced from the party resigned his post of Premier. Thus was the Kenseito utilized "to the limit" by a bureaucratic government before being "thrown over."

The Kenseito, which was hard put to it to gain a new lease of life, managed to reorganize itself into the Rikken Seiyukai (literally, the union of political friends following constitutional principles), with Hirobumi Ito instead of Itagaki for its president. (Accepting the Premiership on Yamagata's resignation, Ito formed a purely party cabinet.) The Kokumin Domeikai (National League), headed by Prince Atsumaro Konoyé, arrayed itself against Ito's administration by raising the standard of "the integration of China and the advancement of Korea." Communications Minister Toru Hoshi was charged with corruption by the entire Opposition parties; but the Lower House, in which the Seiyukai predominated, passed the increased tax bill and other important legislative measures. It was reserved, however, for the Upper House to lodge a strong protest against Ito, alleging that he had acted objectionably in soliciting an Imperial rescript ordering the cessation of political disputes over budgetary problems, and also in soliciting an Imperial decision as to whether or not he should resign in the face of the House's opposition to his administrative policy. Yet the session was brought to a close by the promulgation of another rescript without the questions mentioned above becoming clear-cut issues.

Next appeared the first cabinet of General Katsura. Rejecting the Shimpoto's overtures for co-operation because of its lack of a majority vote in the Diet, Katsura sought a compromise with the Seiyukai and cultivated an understanding with Ito (who happened to be abroad) before facing the Diet. (Katsura won for himself a niche in the history of Japan's foreign relations by concluding the famous alliance with Britain (1902). He revised the election law to confer the franchise on all males paying a direct national tax of not less than ¥10, enlarged the electoral divisions and increased the membership of the Lower

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House from 300 to 375.) The election returned two party leaders, Takashi Hara and Taka-akira Kato, who in later years sat in the same House, the former representing the Seiyukai and the latter the Kenseikai—a unique occurrence in the history of Japan's party politics—and resulted in the signal victory of the Seiyukai. (Thus fully equipped to face the seventeenth session, the Katsura Cabinet proposed to extend the period of the increased land tax law which the second Yamagata Cabinet (1898) had managed to pass through the Diet only on the express condition that it should be terminated after five years.) The first dissentient voice was raised by Ito who had returned from his trip abroad. Ohkuma having likewise expressed himself opposed to this measure, the leaders of the two parties, the Seiyukai and the Kenseito, had a conference and each party passed a resolution to oppose the Katsura Cabinet. (The Diet met its fated dissolution, but in the following election the Opposition was rewarded by an absolute majority.) When the election was over, Ito, without giving Ohkuma the slightest notice of his intended move, shook hands with Katsura conditionally on the latter's relinquishment of the land tax extension bill. This antagonized many former members of the Seiyu Honto and even of the Jiyuto towards Ito who thereupon became the President of the Privy Council and quit- ted the Seiyukai, recommending Prince Saionji for the post of the party's president which he had vacated. The nineteenth session opened with the Saionji-Ohkuma combination showing a clearly defined attitude of opposition to the Katsura Cabinet, but the Diet was doomed to an immediate dissolution on account of the insertion in the reply to the Emperor's speech of a phrase savouring of an impeachment of the Government. (The next election took place on March 1, 1904, when the Russo-Japanese war clouds were fast gathering on the horizon. The entire nation was exhorted to devote itself to the successful execution of the war with the result that, during the twentieth and the twenty-first sessions called the "war-time sessions," all party disputes were suspended and the political field presented for a time a scene of perfect calm. Popular sentiment was inflamed by the "humiliating terms" of the peace treaty, and this led to a nationwide movement, not unattended with bloodshed, against the Katsura Cabinet, which was eventually obliged to resign after retaining office for four years—quite a long term compared with the short-lived administrations of those days.)

A Seiyukai cabinet headed by Prince Saionji next came on the scene, to be displaced, however, by the machination of Yamagata and

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Katsura in favour of the second Katsura Cabinet ; which, being supported by the Seiyukai commanding an absolute majority in the House, made short work of the twenty-seventh session. While the Seiyukai was thus gaining access to the ruling power and planning its aggrandisement as a party at the cost of its political pledges and principles and by yielding to the demands of the more rapacious among its members, the Kensei Honto remained irresolute and vacillating. It seemed to pride itself on making a show of intangible issues of its own creation, with the inevitable result that it lost its prestige, with internal discipline relaxed and its dissatisfied members quarrelling among themselves. It was thus that Ohkuma felt compelled to quit both leadership and party after delivering a farewell address in a most touching strain. This led to the formation of the Rikken Kokuminto (Constitutional National Party), with the Kensei Honto to act as its central staff, but without naming any party leader ; a party, abnormal in its formation, with its plurality of executives. This party effected a " hearty understanding " with the Katsura Cabinet and gave battle to the Seiyukai, but without doing anything of consequence before the twenty-seventh session was closed. (The Katsura Cabinet, now conscious that it had lost whatever measure of popularity it had enjoyed, resigned and made way for the second Saionji Cabinet (August, 1911), which revised the election law and adopted a system of smaller electoral divisions, but clashed with War Minister Uyebara over the proposed increase of the standing army by two divisions.) (The War Minister had made a representation to the Throne on this matter on his own responsibility, which of course meant the collapse of the cabinet of which he was a member. The outgoing second Saionji Cabinet was succeeded by the third Katsura Cabinet (December, 1912). This frequent alternation was popularly expressed in the phrase, " the game of political seesaw played by the Katsura and Saionji teams.") That Katsura accepted his third Premiership when he was Lord Keeper of Imperial Seals and Imperial Chamberlain was arraigned by the Seiyukai as an act that confounded the duties of an Imperial Household official and those of a cabinet minister, and a " movement for the protection of the Constitution " immediately followed. Saionji secured the issue of an Imperial rescript for the purpose of appeasing the Seiyukai, but as the party still remained adamant he withdrew himself completely from the political arena. The third Katsura Cabinet, whose span was the brief one of sixty-three days, collapsed (February, 1913) amid the fierce attacks of the Opposition and the fuming indignation of the public at large.

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The preceding twenty-five years had been a period of severe trial to the Japanese political parties when their struggles with clannish influences, bureaucrats and militarists alternated with their compromises or alliances with the latter. The public criticism against the repeated appearance of the Katsura and Saionji Ministries toward the close of the Meiji Era (1910); the outrageously partisan behaviour of the Seiyu-kai; and Katsura's unconstitutional proceedings, grew louder and stronger under the lead of Japanese journalism then at the dawn of its democratic evolution. By degrees the party members began to sense the discriminatory power of the nation at large, and became conscious of the stern fact that they could not hope for their own advancement without relying on its support. Herein lay the cause of the gradual waning from then on of the power of the bureaucrats and militarists before the advance of the political parties having the nation itself behind them.

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This period extends over nearly twenty years from the formation of the Yamamoto Cabinet in 1913 to the fall of the Inukai Cabinet in 1931. But purely party government came to its own only during the last ten years, the first ten years having still been occupied with struggles against the bureaucrats and militarists.)

(Japanese capitalism, which up to this period was yet in its infancy, now began a rapid development, for which the effects of the Great War were partly responsible. The party expenses came to be secretly as well as openly charged to the capitalists. The two great capitalist interests, the Mitsui and the Mitsubishi, each made a puppet of either the Seiyukai or the Minseito, and the small capitalist groups also contrived connections of a mutually helpful character with the parties in power, thereby controlling the administration directly or indirectly. Especially after 1924 when party government was set on a firm footing, the wishes of the two premier capitalist groups were virtually reflected in the policy of the cabinets which enjoyed their financial support.)

The third Katsura Cabinet was, as already stated, sacrificed on the altar of the "movement for the protection of constitutionalism," and was followed by Admiral Yamamoto's Cabinet. It was then generally considered beyond the pale of possibility that any party which had subscribed itself to this movement could show itself friendly to a statesman of Satsuma extraction and an Admiral besides, but the Seiyukai pledged him its support in consideration of the admission to his cabinet of three of its veteran members, Masahisa Matsuda, Takashi Hara and Hajimé Motoda, and three other men of its choice, Korekiyo Takahashi, Tatsuo Yamamoto and Yoshito Okuda. Yukio Ozaki, Kuni-suké Okazaki and several other staunch Seiyukai members thereupon quitted the party, and the Kokuminto severed its connection with it. (It was the Yamamoto Cabinet that extended the qualification of candidates for the post of Army or Navy Minister to ex-service men instead of limiting it to men in active service as heretofore, thereby eliminating the possibility of either of the two services interfering with the formation of a cabinet.) This is a fact of outstanding importance in the history of Japanese constitutional government that must be cited to the credit of the Yamamoto Cabinet, which, however, soon found itself obliged to succumb to the Opposition's attack levelled against it in connection with the Siemens case where a German firm had bribed a naval officer. On the other hand the Kokuminto, whose attempt to organize a new

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party under Katsura's leadership was frustrated by that statesman's sudden demise, formed the Rikken Doshikai, or Association of Constitutionalists. The Seiyukai, which shared Yamamoto's fate in losing its grasp on power, lost Masahisa Matsuda by death and Saionji by desertion and suffered a terrible decline in popularity through its association with Admiral Yamamoto's Cabinet. It was left to Takashi Hara to assume its presidency at this troublous period of its history.

After Admiral Yamamoto sent in his resignation, Prince Iyásato Tokugawa was commanded by the Emperor to form a new cabinet, but declined. Viscount (now Count) Keigo Kiyoura's attempt to form a new cabinet in response to the Imperial command fell through in the face of the combined resolution of the Seiyukai and the Doshikai to oppose a "super-party," that is, non-party, cabinet and the Navy's refusal to name a representative for his cabinet. Count (later Marquis) Shigenobu Ohkuma was the next recipient of the Imperial command to form a new cabinet (April, 1914). Ohkuma was nominated at Inouyé's suggestion at an Elder Statesmen's conference, contrary to the expectation of both the Seiyukai and the Doshikai, which had demonstrated their opposition to a non-party government and each of which had its own reason for believing itself the most likely nominee. The Seiyukai, as Elder Statesman Inouyé looked at it, owed its greatness to the active exertions of himself and Ito in its favour in the past, and it was therefore preposterous for that party to raise any clamour for the destruction of the influence of the Choshu clan (to which the two statesmen belonged) in the councils of State. And to deal a blow to the Seiyukai the most effective device was to install in office another party opposed to it. So arguing, Inouyé recommended Ohkuma to the Throne. Ohkuma organized his cabinet, of course, by soliciting the support of the Doshikai which was so closely related to him, and his cabinet proved popular as a reaction to the Seiyukai's loss of public sympathy. The thirty-second and thirty-third sessions, which were specially convoked on the outbreak of the Great War and the war with Germany for passing the supplementary naval budget and the expenditure incidental to the execution of the war, closed eventless. The thirty-fifth session saw the introduction of a bill for the creation of two additional army divisions, and Home Minister Ohura's vain attempt to "scrap" the Opposition ended in the dissolution of the House. The popular reaction to the Seiyukai's overbearing self-assertion of many years' duration and Ohkuma's popularity resulted in a signal victory for the Doshikai at the ensuing election (April, 1914) and that party

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was elated to see the two additional divisions bill carried through in the face of the opposition of the Seiyukai and other parties. When Ohura's interference and corrupt practices in the last election became an acute issue, Ohkuma attempted to reorganize his cabinet. Foreign Minister Taka-akira Kato opposed its partial reorganization, being of the opinion that the cabinet as a whole should hold itself responsible for the acts of commission as well as omission of each one of its members. Ohkuma, however, reformed his cabinet, he himself remaining in office in obedience to an Imperial rescript issued to that effect. By this single act the Ohkuma Cabinet alienated itself entirely from public favour; and, at the thirty-seventh session, the bureaucratic partisans in the House of Peers wreaked their vengeance upon the "political assassins" of one of their members (Ohura). The Ohkuma Cabinet managed to muddle somehow through the session, but later, having met with the stern opposition of some of the Elder Statesmen and the bureaucratic elements, Ohkuma resigned, recommending as his successor Taka-akira Kato, who had previously left Ohkuma's Cabinet for the reason previously stated and who now organized the Kenseikai (Constitutional Party) with the former Doshikai for its centre and himself as president.

The cabinet next to appear (October, 1916) was one formed by General Terauchi, a favourite son of the Choshu military clan. The public raised a vociferous cry of opposition to this "super-party" or non-party cabinet, and Inukai of the Kokuminto formed with the Kenseikai a league against the Terauchi Cabinet. This was a bit of double dealing on Inukai's part, designed to lead the Kenseikai into a quagmire and to create a position which rendered the dissolution of the House inescapable. The Seiyukai professed strict neutrality, but was inwardly determined to come to the aid of the Terauchi Cabinet. The Government dissolved the House without giving the majority party which was clearly aligned against it any opportunity to read their address of impeachment, and caused Home Minister Shimpei Goto to interfere with the following election in a manner that enabled the Seiyukai to score a tremendous victory at the expense of the Kenseikai. To evade the reproach of being a super-party cabinet the Government instituted a Committee of Investigation on Foreign Affairs in whose discussion the leaders of the different parties were asked to participate. Kato, president of the Kenseikai, declined the invitation while Hara and Inukai representing the Seiyukai and the Kokuminto, the combined majority parties in the House, accepted it.

(The Great War showed at this time little indication of an early

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end and Japan became deeply involved in it by despatching several of her men-of-war to the Mediterranean Sea to suppress the ravages of German submarines there. The commodity prices here soared high due to scarcity and currency inflation, and with the situation aggravated by the glaringly sordid practices of unscrupulous merchants the nation was thrown into a grave state of insecurity. While democratic ideals were engrossing the attention of the Japanese world of thought, the Government, though sensitive enough to despatch troops to Siberia at the dictate of militaristic impulses, continued to apply pressure upon the thought activities of the people without making any attempt to discover ways and means of making secure the people's livelihood. In August, 1918, a group of housewives in a fishing village of Toyama Prefecture staged a disturbance which soon spread all over the country, necessitating the despatch of troops in some localities. The Terauchi Cabinet, panic-stricken, resigned at once.)

The day at last arrived for the emergence of a purely party cabinet. Prince Saionji, ever alert to discern the trend of the times, declined the Imperial command to form a new cabinet in favour of Takashi Hara (October, 1918), who at once organized a ministry composed entirely of party men, except for the service ministries, in utter defiance of Yamagata's desire to have a number of bureaucratic nominees in the new government.) On this event, even the opposition parties, the Kenseikai and the Kokuminto, found sufficient reason to forget for a time their old grudges against the Seiyukai and to express fond hopes for the future of constitutional government in this country. The Hara Cabinet adopted for its "positive" platform the replenishment of the national defences, the promotion of education, the encouragement of industry, the development of means of communication, the establishment of a jury system and the improvement of local governments, but, as it was not yet in command of an absolute majority in the Diet, it decided to bide its time before carrying out its declared policies.) As a certain means to acquire such a majority the Seiyukai managed to pass through the session (42nd) a bill providing for smaller constituencies than before, and reducing the monetary qualification for eligibility to vote for the Diet to the payment of a minimum direct national tax of ¥3 against the opposition parties' amendment reducing the limit to ¥2. The Diet, however, was dissolved, before it could dispose of certain urgent financial and national defence bills, because the two opposition parties presented a bill for manhood suffrage, which privilege the Seiyukai contended it was too early yet to confer on

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the Japanese people. This, occurring after the passage of the smaller constituency bill, gave rise to a vehement and widespread criticism that the Seiyukai had dissolved the Diet to aid their plan for extending their party influence. The popular dissatisfaction was still more pronounced, for democratic tendencies were then sweeping over the land and manhood suffrage was stressed as means of ensuring political liberty and the participation of the masses in the administration of the State. The suffrage question, no longer a party issue, now assumed a far more serious significance in consequence of the unwarrantable dissolution of the Diet and supplied the Opposition the wherewithal to launch a vigorous attack against the party in power.

It may be explained in parenthesis that the question of manhood suffrage, first mooted in Japan in 1902, was brought before successive sessions of the Diet between 1905 and 1911 till it was "locked out" by the House of Peers in the latter year. Fanned by the democratic wind the fire blazed out again at the time of the Hara Ministry, only to be stifled once more on the score of its untimeliness. For six years hence the movement was kept up in and out of the Diet till it materialized under the "tripartite coalition cabinet" (1922) under Taka-akira Kato's leadership, one of the three parties being the Seiyukai which had opposed the very same measure only six years before.)

The first election held under the Hara Ministry brought to the Seiyukai an overwhelming majority of over 280 members. From then onward Premier Hara's orders were absolute and it was due to his exertions that the party's major planks were translated into action. Out of the revised taxation system, he squeezed the expenditure necessary for an 8-8 fleet and caused improvements to be made in military arms. He caused a network of railways to be built in the country by stressing construction at the expense of repairs and established a large number of higher schools. The promotion of industrial enterprises and the construction and repair of roads and harbours were among other "positive" measures successfully launched by the same ministry. All these works were of course undertaken in the name of the national interest, but in actual fact with particular regard to the benefit of the Seiyukai members concerned. It was at this period that the relation between the political parties and the capitalist groups, regardless of their size, assumed an inordinate degree of intimacy; a fact which was amply demonstrated by a series of criminal exposures which took place during the Hara Ministry's tenure of office and which, coloured for the worse by the general misconception of his strong personality,

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led to his fall at an assassin's hand. It was in these circumstances that the ministry led by Korekiyo Takahashi, the "grand old man" of the Seiyukai, made its appearance (November, 1921).

Takahashi attempted and failed to reorganize his cabinet, and the disclosure of "want of unanimity of opinion" among his colleagues threatened the disruption of the Seiyukai itself. Then Admiral Tomosaburo Kato was commanded by the Emperor to form a new cabinet and he at once formed one of which members of the House of Peers held the major portfolios. The Seiyukai, with a large unwieldy majority in the House of Representatives on its side, declared itself a ministerial party for the simple reason that it was not on the Opposition side, and the following session ended without any noteworthy event.

The minor Kokuminto led by Inukai, which was now reduced to a state of impotence (and whose attempted merger with the Kenseikai had miscarried because of the refusal of the latter's president, Viscount Taka-akira Kato) reorganized itself into the Kakushin (Reconstruction) Club, with several independent bodies included in it.

The death of Admiral Kato on the close of the session compelled the resignation of his cabinet, when Admiral Gonnohyoyé Yamamoto was commanded by the Emperor for a second time to form a cabinet (September, 1923). Yamamoto's Ministry spent a brief but very busy life of four months attending to the aftermath of the great earthquake and fire of September 1, 1923, before it resigned on the ground of its sense of responsibility for a serious case of *lèse majesté* which occurred on December 27, the day the Diet was opened.

The Yamamoto Cabinet was followed by the cabinet of Count Kiyoura, also with a strong Upper House colouring, to the utter dismay of both the Seiyukai and the Kenseikai, each of which parties was working till the last moment in the firm, though delusive, belief that it would receive the Imperial command to form a new cabinet. The Seiyukai, when it found itself thus obliged to oppose the new Government, split into two camps, one staying with the original party under Takahashi's presidency and the other and dissentient one calling itself the Seiyu Honto (Seiyu Proper) and led by Teijiro Yamamoto, Takejiro Tokonami, Hajimé Motoda and Tokugoro Nakahashi under a pro-Kiyoura standard. The original Seiyukai then joined hands with their erstwhile opponents, the Kenseikai, and the Kakushin Club to form the so-called Goken-sampa, or "tripartite constitutional federation," and faced the 1924 session, with "Down with the Kiyoura Cabinet! Down with the privileged classes" for their slogan. The Diet was

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dissolved and the succeeding election resulted in the return of an overwhelmingly large number of "constitutionalists." The Kiyoura Ministry went out, giving place to that led by Kato (Taka-akira).

This marks the beginning of the so-called "normal constitutional procedure" that lasted for the next ten years and was characterized by the transfer of power from one to the other of the two major parties in the political field of the country.

The Taka-akira Kato Ministry founded on the combined strength of the three parties, the Kenseikai, the Seiyukai and the Kakushin Club, could and did carry into actual practice the manhood suffrage so long demanded by the Kenseikai, and introduced improvements, however limited, in the organization of the House of Peers. The 1925, or fiftieth, session of the Diet which brought about these legislative changes deserves special mention in the constitutional history of Japan.

The death of Justice Minister Yokota of Seiyukai extraction, and the resignation of Korekiyo Takahashi from the presidency of the party and at the same time from the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce, were the signal for dissension between the three parties, which was further aggravated by the amalgamation of the Seiyukai and the Kakushin Club. The differences between the Kenseikai and the Seiyukai came to a head on questions of taxation, and Premier Kato, acting on the principle of the indivisibility of a cabinet's responsibility, caused those members of his cabinet representing the Seiyukai to resign together with himself and the other members representing his own party.

The Imperial order to form the next cabinet was again served on Taka-akira Kato, and thus a purely Kenseikai cabinet appeared on the scene. The Seiyukai and the Seiyu Honto had shortly before joined hands by way of anticipating the Imperial order in the former's favour. Foiled in this expectation, Takejiro Tokonami, president of the Seiyu Honto, who saw the uselessness of his further association with the Seiyukai, tried a rapprochement with the Kenseikai. Thus started Tokonami's subsequent "tattered career" of ten years' duration, marked by a succession of his eager but unavailing attempts to grasp political power. The Kato Cabinet, severed from the Seiyukai and finding itself in its own element, nevertheless was keenly feeling the lack of a majority in the Diet, and, therefore, welcomed the Seiyu Honto's overtures so that the two parties managed to pass through the 1926 session of the Diet a number of laws bearing on taxation and other subjects. On the death of Premier Kato, while the House was in

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session, Reijiro Wakatsuki succeeded him as Premier and party leader and weathered many difficulties in the Diet. Later Tokonami attempted to supercede Wakatsuki as Premier by bringing up the Bokuretsu issue (a case of *lèse majesté* by a Korean), but when Wakatsuki showed defiance, it became apparent that the Seiyukai and the Seiyu Honto would make a common front against the Government in the 1927 session. Hereupon Wakatsuki suspended the Diet and called a conference of the presidents of the three parties, himself representing the Kenseikai, General Tanaka, the Seiyukai, and Tokonami, the Seiyu Honto, and it was agreed among the participants in this conference that they should desist from any political disputes at the commencement of the new Emperor Showa's régime. This "extremely unreasonable procedure on the part of the political parties," as the public regarded it, met with widespread condemnation; and the indignation of Osachi Hamaguchi, Kenzo Adachi, and Tasuku Yegi, members in the Wakatsuki Cabinet, at its failure to dissolve the House and face a general election "knew no bounds." When the Diet was reopened, there was a disgraceful bit of mud-slinging in connection with the alleged misappropriation of secret funds by General Tanaka, president of the Seiyukai, during his tenure of office as War Minister; and this fact, aggravated by acts of violence in the House, redounded to the discredit of the Wakatsuki Cabinet, and the Speaker and the President of the Houses tendered their resignation before the session (1926-27) was over. The question of the "earthquake bills," or those bills issued prior to the great earthquake and fire of September 1, 1923, and awaiting settlement, was now raised while the House was in session, and gave a tremendous shock to the economic circles of the country and caused many banks to suspend payment. The Wakatsuki Ministry submitted to the Privy Council for its approval an urgency Imperial proclamation on specific measures devised to save the situation, but the ill feeling entertained by the council towards the cabinet caused its immediate resignation (April, 1927).

General Tanaka, president of the Seiyukai, was commanded to form the next cabinet. Tokonami of the Kensei Honto, who was disappointed in his expectation of being favoured with that command (an expectation based on the fact of Tanaka's disqualification on account of the secret funds issue and also on the fact that Tokonami had participated in the tripartite conference referred to before) disdained to rejoin Tanaka's standard and planned to merge his party with the Kenseikai. The result was the formation of the present Minseito, or Popular

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Government Party, in February, 1927, with Osachi Hamaguchi for its president, with the new party sworn to opposition to the Seiyukai. The Tanaka Cabinet had, at the time it was organized, earned popular estimation because it was a purely Seiyukai cabinet, and it peremptorily turned down every demand emanating from the Upper House for ministerial portfolios; but its subsequent disposal of offices and other matters of State proved the reverse of reasonable or expedient. Korekiyo Takahashi, who had accepted the post of Finance Minister for the simple purpose of alleviating the difficulties of the post-earthquake financial world, left it as soon as he was assured of the return of normal conditions within a measurable period. All this added to the unpopularity of the Tanaka Cabinet which dissolved the House (January, 1928) after announcing the general outlines of its policy, but without allowing the Opposition to utter a single word of disapproval.

The sixteenth general election (February, 1928) that followed was the first to be conducted under the manhood suffrage law. It was vitiated by the interference and oppression engineered by Home Minister Kisaburo Suzuki, but the will of the people at large was clearly reflected in the result, 217 for the Minsei against 219 for the Seiyu. Although this shows a majority for the Seiyukai, yet the trifling difference of only two seats in favour of the ministerial party was actually a record-breaking victory for the Opposition, when it is compared with the overwhelming majorities scored by ministerial parties in the past, and well indicated the public resentment to the Tanaka Cabinet's interference in the election. The fact that Tanaka had to solicit a message from the Emperor permitting his retention of office in spite of the opposition expressed to his recommendation of Fusanosuké Kuhara for a cabinet member; the ministerial changes necessitated by Home Minister Suzuki's interference in the last election; the suppression of the Communists; and the promulgation of the Peace Preservation Law and other reactionary acts, were the principal events of his administration. (Toward China the Tanaka Cabinet adopted a militaristic policy of a coercive nature which did little to improve relations between the two countries.) It was enabled to steer clear of danger in the Lower House by reason of Tokonami and his party's defection from the Minseito to join the Seiyukai, and to bring the session to a close without suffering anything from the Upper House's attacks against it in connection with the Imperial message question mentioned above. After the session was over Tanaka had to offer humiliating explanations of the terminology employed in the Treaty for the Outlawry of War, and even

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then barely succeeded in obtaining the Privy Council's approval of it. The murder of Chang Tso-lin by a bomb explosion in Manchuria caused the military and other sections of the Japanese public to bring extreme pressure to bear upon the Tanaka Cabinet, which eventually "died an ignominious death in July, 1929."

The Imperial command to organize the next cabinet fell upon President Hamaguchi of the Minseito to the total disregard of the new party led by Tokonami, who, now completely disillusioned in his fond and repeated dreams of Premiership, returned to his old home, the Seiyukai, six years after he had quitted it. (The Hamaguchi Cabinet had for its distinctive aims budgetary retrenchment, the removal of the ban on the export of gold, the strict discipline of the civil service and other measures of an essentially negative purport, although it was in favour of increasing the Treasury's share of the cost of compulsory elementary education. Furthermore, it revealed the intrigues of certain members of the Opposition to sell private railway lines to the Government, and also the sale of decorations for meritorious service by the Chief of the Bureau of Decorations as well as the Yamanashi affair; all of which threw the Seiyukai into a state of extreme nervousness and set going a movement for expelling its president, Tanaka. The sudden death of Tanaka and the appointment of Inukai to succeed him saved the party from the grave situation to which it was exposed.

The Seiyukai, smarting under the heavy blows dealt it by the Minseito, and resolved to pay it in kind, fell to exposing the old, long-buried sins of that party. Education Minister Kobashi in the Minseito cabinet, one of the targets chosen for this purpose, had to expiate his alleged defaults by resigning his office. The mud-slinging thus indulged in by the major political parties—"their war of exposure"—left an indelible mark on the memory of the nation at large, and the tide of the "emergency period" which followed soon left them floundering beyond all hope of successful revival. They were digging their own graves, a fact which unfortunately even their leading members were unable to discern at the time.

(The Hamaguchi Cabinet suspended the ban on the export of gold before facing the session of the Diet; but, sensitive of the difficulties which the majority party in opposition was prepared to throw in its way, dissolved the Diet immediately after it was opened.) The ensuing election resulted in a tremendous victory of the Minseito. On Hamaguchi being disabled by a would-be assassin, Foreign Minister Shidehara assumed the Premiership for a time concurrently with his own

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office. A slip of the tongue on the Foreign Minister's part during the Diet's discussion of the London Treaty led to bloody fisticuffs on the floor of the House—a fact which still further degraded the Diet in popular estimation. The result was the reappointment of Wakatsuki as president of the Minseito and his nomination to the post of Premier.

The removal of the gold embargo which the Hamaguchi Cabinet resolutely carried out was designed to accelerate the curtailment and rationalization of industrial activities in general and to produce the inevitable result of checking the inflation which was inimical to their normal development; a result which the financial groups, representing Japanese capitalism of the time, were eagerly desirous of seeing brought about. Their expectations, however, were belied by the economic results that actually transpired. No small section of the Japanese capitalist interests found itself unable to withstand the effects of deflation, in other words, adjustment and rationalization proved to be an obstacle to the desired improvement in Japanese industry. Besides, there existed certain factors that rendered the execution of the deflationist policy a virtual impossibility. In foreign countries the rationalization of industry had been completed and its advantages had vanished before giving way to a new situation of ominous forebodings. The time was altogether unpropitious for a similar movement in Japan which finally proved highly injurious to her capitalist interests. The Manchurian incident marked the starting point for the military to make incursions into the political field; and it was the movement for co-operation with the military started by those capitalists who perceived in time the inevitability of this tendency, that worked the ruin of the Wakatsuki Cabinet. Here is an apt illustration of the working of capitalism which, when meeting any obstacle in its path, makes its magic influence felt in the political field so that it may thus get rid of such obstacle; and otherwise takes its part in directing the politics of the country. No wonder that the next Seiyukai cabinet led by Inukai reinstituted the gold embargo at the instance of those financiers in order to "protect" their purchase of dollars.

The upheaval of the reformist movement in the country following the outbreak of the Manchurian incident culminated in a dastardly act perpetrated by a body of men inspired by the movement, namely, the assassination of Premier Inukai on May 15, 1932. Party government in Japan had been given its *coup de grâce.*]

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The close attachment between the political parties and the capitalists, and particularly the financial interests, in the closing days of party government in Japan—or, to put it more bluntly, the financiers' political supremacy—soon resolved itself into an offensive against the medium and small sized capitalists and the labouring classes. This caused a reactionary movement among the latter, as exemplified by the civil officers' opposition to the reduction of their salaries, and it stimulated "fascist" tendencies among both the urban and rural populations. The band of assassins, the "Blood Brotherhood League," which lifted up its head at this time, assassinated one after another of the high Government functionaries, prominent politicians and financiers. This deplorable state of things had for one of its causes the disgraceful scenes enacted in the Diet by party politicians, and the evils attending the interdependence of capitalism and party government. The reactionary feeling against party government also manifested itself in the opposition to the Washington Conference for the reduction of armaments. To the nationalist elements in both services the diplomacy pursued by the Government appeared effeminate and was blamed in a large measure for the anti-Japanese attitude of China. Their demand for a "strong China policy" culminated at the Liuchiaokou affair of September 18, 1931.)

(Home Minister Adachi in the Wakatsuki Cabinet (who lost no time in perceiving the rise of "fascist" tendencies in the country) and his supporters announced themselves in favour of the "co-operative" movement.) In their opinion party politics in the country in the past had materially reduced the popular esteem for the Diet and were responsible for a painful deterioration in the living conditions of the nation at large. The militarists, for their part, influenced by the Manchurian incident, naturally began to have a voice in the civil government and the voice threatened to become larger and larger in the councils of State. The usual form of government consistent with constitutionalism, i.e. government by a party majority, was powerless, as Adachi viewed the situation, to cope with this "fascist" influence now beginning to assert itself in the country. The existing parties were therefore to be advised to make peace among themselves, and if possible to "co-operate" with the militarists as a means of reinstating themselves and party government.) Such was the reasoning that prompted Adachi and his followers to promote the "co-operative" movement in collaboration

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with a section of the Seiyukai similarly minded and centring around Fusanosuké Kuhara.

Those adherents of the parties then existing in Japan who were still deeply imbued with the idea and ideals of party government scoffed at this suggestion for preserving their lives as the self-interested scheme of some ambitious politicians. The Wakatsuki Cabinet, whose "disunity" was thus exposed, collapsed, giving way to the Inukai Cabinet (1931-32) which also spurned the "co-operative" move and assigned all its portfolios to Seiyukai members.

The new cabinet reinstituted the gold embargo, and, dissolving the Diet (July, 1932) immediately after it was opened, gained the unprecedentedly huge majority of 300 seats in the Lower House, to the infinite joy of the Seiyukai. Inukai had lost none of the iron nerves and the strategic skill with which in the cradle period of constitutional government in this country he had fought the bureaucratic and militarist cliques of the time, but he lacked the perspicacity to discern the "fascist" influence that was steadily penetrating or rather overwhelming the country. Before Inukai's cabinet could proceed to carry its platform into practice or to give a lead in general governmental activities, War Minister General Araki, who had kept pace with the military detachments in Manchuria, became a controlling power and so compelled the cabinet, so to speak, to take orders from him and the extreme rightists. The decay of the political parties had already started during the last days of the Wakatsuki Cabinet, and the Inukai Cabinet was simply dragging out its life by the sheer force of inertia. The sound of the mortal shot aimed at Inukai at his official residence (May 15, 1932) made Japanese society feel more keenly than ever the pressure of the "emergency period" that was fast overcoming it.

The next cabinet to appear on the scene was that of Admiral Makoto Saito. On Inukai's death the Seiyukai nominated Home Minister Kisaburo Suzuki for its president by way of anticipating the Imperial command to him to form a new cabinet. It was quite natural for a party, which commanded an absolute majority of 300 in the Lower House and which had lost its Premier-President not through his political death but through the unconscionable act of an assassin, to entertain such expectation; especially so when it was remembered that the Kato (Taka-akira) Cabinet was succeeded by the first Wakatsuki Cabinet and the Hamaguchi Cabinet by the second Wakatsuki Cabinet on the death of the respective leaders of the preceding cabinets. Yet the gravity of the situation then existing was such that it could not possibly be

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alleviated by the application of such a political nostrum.

Elder Statesman Saionji, on receiving the Imperial enquiry as to the most suitable nominee for the next Premier, did not follow his usual practice, maintained for the past ten years, of immediately requesting the messenger from the Court to inform the Throne the name of the person of his choice. Instead, coming himself to Tokyo (from his villa at Okitsu) and inviting to his mansion each Elder Statesman in turn, Saionji asked each his opinion on the matter for use in framing his answer to the Throne. Saionji, who to all appearances approved of the "normal constitutional procedure" so far employed, of conferring the Premiership on the leader of the majority party, repudiated the party leaders on this particular instance and recommended to the Throne Admiral Makoto Saito (May, 1932). Since then nothing more has been heard of a party ministry. In fact the political parties have been reduced to such miserable straits that a statesman who might otherwise be counted among the candidates for a vacant Premiership is denied that distinction because of his party leadership. A cabinet which embraces one or two Ministers and a number of parliamentary Vice-Ministers nominated from among the partymen now goes by the name of a co-operative or national cabinet, and the House is coerced into giving absolute allegiance to the Government, so that the power that controls each given situation is entirely in the hands of the right elements of the services and bureaucrats.)

(Admiral Saito, the prospective Premier, called on President Suzuki of the Seiyukai and President Wakatsuki of the Minseito and asked their participation and co-operation in his cabinet, but the presidents preferred to stay out of the cabinet themselves, though promising their assistance to it.) The Seiyukai sent three Ministers and the Minseito two Ministers to the new cabinet, which, with the other portfolios filled by militarists and non-party officials, constituted a "national administration" and remained in office for two years and one month till July, 1934, having made its way successfully through two special and two ordinary sessions.) (Contrary to the general expectation that this cabinet, national in name but in reality a mosaic assemblage of different parties, would have a thorny path to tread, the strong propelling force supplied by the aged triad, Premier Saito, who is perseverance incarnate, the popular Finance Minister, Takahashi, and Home Minister Tatsuo Yamamoto, appeased the nationwide unrest created by the May 15 incident, and saw the matter of Manchuria and Japan's withdrawal from the League of Nations successfully dealt with, and further-

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more, passed through the House a huge budgetary expenditure, comprising the outlay incidental to the Manchurian affair and the expenses required for the replenishment of the national defence, and also for the alleviation of financial distress in the impoverished agricultural communities. Of course the fact that this motley cabinet lasted for over two years is due, on the one hand, to the impotence of the political parties, their loss of public credit, and above all the absence of any controlling force among the Seiyukai members occupying three hundred seats in the House, (which disabled the party from uttering a single word of dissension from the cabinet's decisions); and, on the other, to the existence of a situation, which both domestically as well as internationally, forbade a form of government dominated by a single party and was favourable to the maintenance of the Saito Cabinet with its composite character.) During the sixty-fifth session (January, 1934) the Imperial Rayon Company's bribery case cost the Saito Cabinet the loss of one or two of its Ministers allegedly involved in it, but without calling into question its continued retention of office. The results, however, of subsequent judicial investigations into the matter, though not final, dealt the cabinet its death blow. This cabinet, which was born, as stated before, charged with the primary mission to settle the May 15 incident and to prosecute the country's Manchurian policy, rendered at the same time significant services in other respects. (It introduced the laws guaranteeing the position of civil officers, thereby checking their unwarranted transfer from one post to another, a practice which formerly obtained under party administrations; and it amended the rules relating to the personnel of the Privy Council. It must be noted here, however, that loud clamours had been raised not long before and still continue to be raised for altering the laws guaranteeing official positions which, it is claimed, merely serve to encourage the inroad of officialdom into political fields and to impede the promotion of the younger and deserving officials.)

(Home Minister Goto, an astute bureaucrat in the Saito Cabinet, now figured as the chief of the organization committee for the succeeding Okada Cabinet. Okada assigned the leading places in his cabinet to non-party officials and offered two to the Seiyukai and one to the Minseito.) On meeting the Seiyukai's sudden opposition to this arrangement Okada offered one more chair to each of both parties, but failed to take in the Seiyukai, which saw through Okada's attempt to form a cabinet nominally national but bureaucratic at the core. Hereupon Okada hit upon the plan of including three Seiyukai members

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in the persons of Takejiro Tokonami, Tatsunosuké Yamazaki and Shinya Uchida, after causing them to retire from their party, and it just succeeded. Okada thus drove the Seiyukai into the position of an open Opposition; but, with the support of the Minseito and of those within the ranks of the Seiyukai who sympathized with the three temporary deserters, managed to retain office for one year and nine months, making a great display of his "ten-year programme." Under ordinary circumstances, the Okada Cabinet would have easily succumbed to a non-confidence vote staged by the Opposition party commanding a majority of 250, but thanks to the vigilant watch kept over the Seiyukai by the rightists in the name of the "crisis," and owing to the fear that, if it were to adopt a hostile attitude toward the cabinet in power, Tokonami's followers in it might rise in open rebellion, the Okada Cabinet was enabled to draw out a comparatively long life. While it remained in office this cabinet witnessed the reorganization of Japan's military forces in Manchuria, a movement for the coalition of the Minseito and the Seiyukai, the disruption of the same movement due to the so-called "explosive motion" introduced by the Seiyukai at the sixty-sixth session (May, 1936), the retirement of President Wakatsuki of the Minseito, the appointment of Commerce and Industry Minister Machida to succeed Wakatsuki, and the attempted reunion of the parties preparatory to the institution of the Conference for the Investigation of National Policies. (By the time, however, when the sixty-eighth session (1935-36) was opened such topics as "the estrangement of the military services and the general public," the "militarists' intervention in politics" and the "infringement of personal rights by judicial authorities" were considered most likely to occupy the attention of the House.) The opposition to bureaucratic administration had grown intense and a serious political situation was anticipated. Thereupon the Government dissolved the House (January, 1936), by ranging on its side the Minseito and the Showakai, composed of the Tokonami following. The result of the election (February, 1936) confirmed the Minseito in its position as the foremost party, and, with the Showakai and other elements added, it easily occupied a majority position in the House. Thus the Okada Cabinet seemed assured of an easy future, until it was overthrown by the February 26 incident, occurring soon after the election.

(The Hirota Cabinet succeeding to the Okada Cabinet was organized (March, 1936) under conditions experienced for the first time in the history of Japanese constitutional government, that is, while Tokyo, the capital, was actually in a state of siege.) The political parties one and

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all had to bury their past grievances under the heavy pressure brought to bear on them by the militarists and to pledge co-operation with the Hirota Cabinet.

The main duty of the Hirota Cabinet was to attend to the aftermath of the February 26 incident. It essayed the execution of its "eight major objects" by utilizing the propelling influence of the rightists regardless of the popular feeling of insecurity created thereby. (It attempted to enforce the reconstructionist idea of invoking strong State power within the mechanism of industrial economy; to revive the old rule by which nominees for Army and Navy Ministers were limited to officers in active service; to alter the system of taxation for the purpose of replenishing the national defence, and to introduce changes in the regulations relating to the Diet.) The Seiyukai and the Minseito, notwithstanding that they had assumed a reconciliatory attitude toward the Hirota Cabinet at the time it was formed and that they had each two representatives in the cabinet, attacked the Government for its failure, due to its conclusion of an anti-Communist treaty with Germany, to have the Russo-Japanese fishery treaty revised, and also for the impasse to which the diplomatic negotiations with China had been brought. The militarists, dissatisfied with this sudden change in the Opposition's attitude toward the Hirota Cabinet and further irritated by the severe criticisms directed against them by a Seiyukai spokesman soon after the seventieth session (1936-37) was opened, demanded the immediate dissolution of the House. (Hirota chose to resign rather than dissolve the House, and the Hayashi Cabinet came into being (February, 1937). Since Hayashi would not consent to the admission of any party member to his cabinet except on the condition of resigning from his party, none of the political parties was represented in his cabinet, which faced the Diet session (1936-37) with the posts of Parliamentary Vice-Ministers and Councillors (several or all of which had been filled by party members in the past) left vacant. The Seiyukai, not daring to court dissolution, "co-operated" with the Hayashi Cabinet in fulfilling the various programmes bequeathed by the Hirota Cabinet, but on the last day of the session the House was dissolved for no explicable reason. This caused the two Opposition parties to make common cause against the Hayashi Cabinet, and the results of the following election (April 30, 1937) were so overwhelmingly in their favour, that they were encouraged to start a movement for the overthrow of the cabinet. General Hayashi, however, seemed to attach little significance to the numerical strength of the Opposition, being

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apparently determined to abide by the formal declaration through the Diet of the Opposition's political convictions as based on their correct estimation of the existing critical or crucial situation. To the surprise of all, the Hayashi Cabinet resigned on May 31, whether or not on account of the fierce attacks levelled at it by the political parties it was impossible to determine at the time. Prince Konoyé was invited to form the next cabinet (June, 1937), with virtually all shades of political opinion in the country standing by him and, he did not neglect to avail himself of the support to be derived from every known direction.

Calm was restored in the political situation, and at the time of writing the Japanese nation is casting watchful eyes upon the Konoyé Cabinet to know what it proposes to accomplish. The party leaders expected that Konoyé would personally visit them and ask for their assistance, for they could not imagine that Konoyé would follow Hayashi's example in inviting their ill will by paying them no respect when forming his cabinet. But Konoyé would do nothing of the kind. He made overtures to individual party members whose service he desired to enlist; and the parties, though chagrined by this unexpected procedure on Konoyé's part, could raise no open objection to it. Konoyé, however, was astute enough to make some show of respect for the parties' claim to attention by reinstituting the posts of parliamentary Vice-Ministers and Councillors which had been suspended by the Hayashi cabinet, and nominating party members to most of the posts. Yet it is only fair to say that Konoyé has no more regard for the present parties than as an element in the politics of the country that must receive some recognition.

Thus it is that today, six years after the commencement of the critical or "emergency" period, no one is found speaking of the restitution of party government or dreaming of the possibility of a party leader being commanded by the Throne to form a cabinet. Whither the political parties in Japan are going, is the next subject of our discussion.

THE FUTURE OF THE JAPANESE POLITICAL PARTIES

The reader will have perceived from the foregoing passages that the struggles between the party politicians, the clannish bureaucrats and militarists in the early period of our constitutional government were followed by an era of "brilliant" or, stated more plainly, useful achievement by the political parties, which was contemporaneous with the growth of Japanese capitalism; and that, following the headlong advance toward a bloc economy which was initiated by the Manchurian incident, the State controlled economy has had its appropriate and powerful effect upon the national life. The result is that the directive power exercised by the political parties has since grown less and less; and at the present time, the militarists are exercising great influence on the political affairs of the country. The political parties which were the ruling factor in the administration of the country before the Manchurian incident occurred have now almost lost their influence: terribly crippled by the May 15 incident, they were given the fatal blow by the incident of February 26. The military naturally slipped into the place left vacant by the political parties, although they are not permitted on constitutional grounds to assume any position of responsibility. Further, the February 26 incident, whose authors attempted to introduce a radical change in the economic and social structure of the country, while compelling certain other influences to prostrate themselves before the advance of the military, by no means served to endorse the nation's conception of their oneness. Since the occurrence of that event, the military have begun to reveal themselves in the political field less conspicuously than they did before, although they are not keeping, and cannot keep for one thing, that perfect reticence which was characteristic of them in bygone days.

(The effect of the yearly increasing expenditure for national defence is being felt by the nation more and more acutely. The military are wisely restraining themselves from appearing as the controlling force for the fear, for one reason, that if the nation should come to feel any further pressure being brought upon its political life by the extreme militarists, they would thereby be courting the unfortunate eventuality of "alienation of popular sympathy." Yet it is the militarists plus the rightists who are really controlling the situation.)

(The appearance of exercising political power next to that of the militarists is represented by a group of bureaucratic civil officers, who

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are turning to their own advantage the diminishing confidence of the nation in the political parties and the ardent desire of the militarists to effect reforms ; a desire, which the technical knowledge possessed by the bureaucrats, but lacking in the militarists, is able to do much to satisfy. Such bureaucrats have no national support behind them, nor do they constitute any material influence. They are "a fox in the position of aping the dignity of a lion" as an old Japanese saying goes. Their *raison d'être* in this connection is that they are the possessors of technical information concerning social and economic problems which are ever increasing in complexity ; and therefore, they are qualified, as a steady influence in the administrative machinery, to carry out whatever control of the national economy the real power behind them commands.

In the foregoing history of Japanese political parties, the reader's attention has been directed mainly to the two leading parties, the Seiyukai and Minseito. We have now to consider the appearance of a proletarian party in this country as an unavoidable consequence of the growing disparity of wealth between the rich and the poor, itself a feature of advanced capitalism. This party, which sent seven representatives to the first session (following the sixteenth general election) convoked after the institution of manhood suffrage (May, 1925), returned thirty-seven successful candidates at the twentieth election (April, 1937). This was a positive menace to the already existing parties. (Proletarianism had attracted little attention in Japan before the twentieth session, and it was generally believed that Japanese capitalism had come under State control before it had reached its final stage as in the Western countries, and, collaterally, that the State or governmental protection, encouragement or restraint of the labouring classes had prevented the mutual rivalry between the rich and the poor, or between capital and labour, from reaching an extreme degree, thereby precluding the proletarian party from making any rapid progress in this country.) How then to account for the extraordinary development of this party in recent years is a question that deserves a most careful enquiry. Even altogether apart from economic questions, government by the existing political parties has been tainted by various shameful incidents of a nature that must alienate the nation's moral support from them. Granted that they are capable of purification by their own efforts, so long as they remain mere conglomerations of incompetent politicians that dare not clarify their position or advance their legitimate claims for the sake of constitutional government, they cannot be trusted to reflect the will of the nation in the Diet. It is doubtless these considerations

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that have increased the pro-proletarian vote, for the public has been keenly sensitive to the vigorous attitude of the new party in the House and greatly attracted by the practical wisdom born of personal experience that characterizes its political activities, and has been led to express their feeling in the overwhelming pluralities secured in their favour in suitable electional divisions. A most eloquent testimony to the correctness of this assertion is borne out by the fact that this tendency has been most noticeable in the urban constituencies, which contain more intelligentsia than elsewhere.

To counteract this leftist proletarian party a movement was set on foot for creating a rightist party having "the protection of the national polity" for its slogan and addressing itself to the patriotic sentiment of the nation at large. This latter party, however, does not yet propose to concern itself immediately about the living conditions of the people in the way that the former does. This, added to the fact that the nation smells, rightly or wrongly, of the "fascist" proclivities of the rightist party, gives so far little reason to hope that the latter will gain nation wide support. It is no exaggeration to say that rightist control of the Japanese parliamentary government in the immediate future is a virtual improbability. The present situation may be best described by saying that the two major parties in the political field of Japan, the Minseito and the Seiyukai, are being attacked on both flanks, on the one side by the militarists and bureaucrats, and by the proletariat on the other.

Are the two major parties powerless to react against this attack? Is there absolutely no chance of their being compelled by some external force to effect some reaction? The answers to these questions form the key to the solution of the problems surrounding our political parties.

Since the outbreak of the Manchurian incident the political parties in Japan have, professedly in the legitimate exercise of their constitutional rights, objected to the military's interference in national politics, sometimes in a resolute way, and sometimes quite ineffectively, much in the manner of "a dog howling at his distant enemy." Particularly in the House have they asked some crucial questions about the pamphlets on *National Defence* and *Statement on the Attempted Alienation of Popular Support from the Military* issued by the Army authorities, thereby irritating the ruling elements in both services. But they have recognized the military's proceedings in Manchuria as a *fait accompli* and have, in the final issue, raised no objection to "consenting" to the defrayment of the required expenses.

(As the leaders of the existing political parties diagnosed the situa-

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tion, the military's interference in the administration of the country was but a concomitant of the wave of militarism which had swept over the country since the Manchurian incident, but which was destined to subside before long. The military who were now pushing to the forefront of the political field would grow stronger yet if checked in their progress. The partymen could afford to contemplate with calm the possibility of the military acquiring a greater power than at present, but certainly not the chance of the discord between themselves and the military leading to a domestic disturbance. They were therefore well advised, they concluded, to exercise patience and bide their time. They would connive at the anti-military discourses by the more outspoken members of the liberal persuasion, but would gag them as soon as they were found overstepping certain limits. They knew that those members, who regarded the least show of a conciliatory attitude on the part of the military when answering to interpellations at the House as a sign of their weakening and discharged volleys of irritating questions at them, were merely stiffening instead of humbling the latter. For this reason the leaders of the political parties elected to exercise strict moderation in their dealings with the military and to wait for the arrival of a time more propitious for evolving their own plans.

(But it soon became evident that the partymen were entirely at fault in adopting this attitude. The militarists were not riding on the temporary wings of militarism when making their incursions into the political field. Economically considered, the Manchurian incident is a phase in the prevalent international tendencies, a stage of transition from national to bloc economy. The economic nationalism and isolationist policy of this country, as in others, necessarily make it self-centred and demand the replenishment of its defence as a matter of supreme importance to it;) a fact which in itself tends toward the aggrandizement of the services and their acquisition of ample power and, as a natural sequel to it, of the actual influence in politics. (As long as these economic, political and international relations exist, the power of the militarists will show no decline. The favourable opportunity for the assertion of what appear to the Japanese political parties to be their legitimate rights—an opportunity for which they have patiently waited for these six years—studiously avoiding meanwhile all occasions of collision with the military, has so far failed to present itself.)

(The already faint prospects for the arrival of such an opportunity are further darkened by the fact that the political parties have yielded to the military's demand for the restoration of the old rule which limits

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the nominees for the posts of Ministers of War and Navy to officers in active service. This is a serious problem in Japanese politics. In the foregoing account it has been told how when War Minister General Uyehara in the second Saionji Cabinet (August, 1911—December, 1912) presented his resignation to the Throne on his own individual account because of his disagreement with his colleagues on the proposed increase of the standing army by two divisions, the cabinet as a whole had to resign for the weighty reason, according to Japanese political ethics, that it had failed to preserve a unanimity of opinion among its own members. This is another way of saying that a government and its service members have to come down mutually half way and strike up a compromise when serious questions arise which threaten the existence of the government. The party politicians had cried themselves hoarse to bring about a curtailment of the services' privilege long before Admiral Yamamoto's Cabinet in 1913 succeeded in having the vexed rule so amended as to read in substance that "the Ministers of the two services may be appointed from among officers in active service as well as those on the retired list." It is true that the altered rule was never acted upon during the twenty odd years after it was introduced, but the existence of such a rule itself may be deemed to have served to restrain the service from interfering in the formation of every new cabinet as they might otherwise have done. (In May, 1936, the restriction of eligible nominees to officers in active service—the ruling in force before 1913—was restored by the Hirota Cabinet, the reason assigned being that the amended rule had never been applied, not even once. The party representatives, two from each party, who were seated in the Hirota Cabinet, proved themselves unable to oppose or prevent this reversion to the old rule. And the Hirota Cabinet fell because of the restoration of this old rule. War Minister General Terauchi, who, by way of speaking for the Army, demanded but was refused the dissolution of the Diet, resigned; and Hirota could not but resign also.) Then General Ugaki attempted, under the Imperial command, to form a new cabinet but failed for the reason that none of the military's nominees would accept the portfolio. The Hayashi Cabinet coming next barely managed to organize itself (February, 1937) by accepting the military's candidate for its Army Minister instead of filling the post with that of its own choice. In view of the steady growth of the influence of the two services, the opinion is gaining ground inside the political parties that since every attempt by the reformist elements in the parties to struggle against this influence is attended with difficulties, efforts must

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be made to reconstruct the present parties by giving a thorough recognition to the existence of the state of affairs which confers upon the services a large power in the country's politics, and by seeking "co-operation" with such directive power. The intra-party movement based on this opinion is considered certain to gain increasing strength largely because of the irritating influence of another movement started among the reconstructionist non-party elements in the House to organize themselves into a new party in combination with a group of militarists and bureaucrats outside the House.

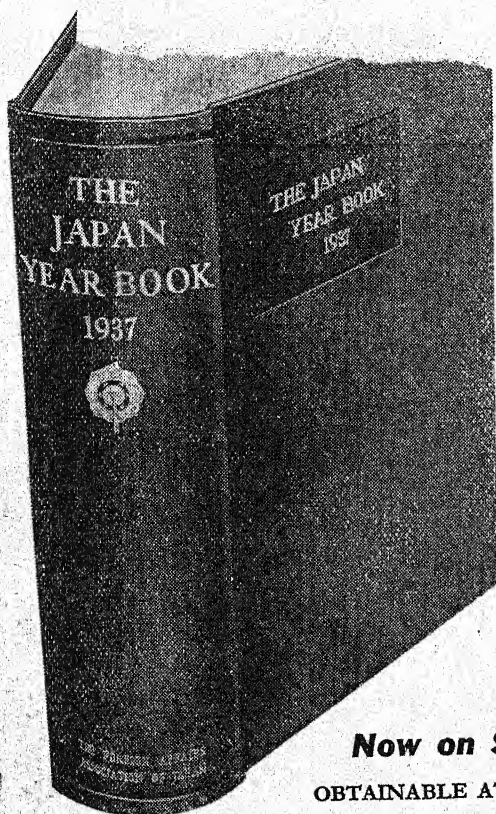
Broadly speaking, the reconstructionist movement comprises two camps, one consisting of those die-hard constitutionalists who would endure no matter what hardships for the sake of liberalism, following the example set by their predecessors who flourished about 1900; and the other of those politicians who are for organizing a new party which is representative of the combined interests of the services, the political parties and the capitalists. Thus the existing political parties are destined to be dragged about by the power born of necessity, no matter whether their leaders will it or not. There is not a single partyman breathing who would dare to sit with folded hands and just wait on opportunity. The way the Konoyé Cabinet was formed has nothing in common with the usual procedure approved by the constitutionalist conception of the rule by the majority. It gave no preference to representatives of the majority party in the House; it attempted to rectify a time-honoured article of faith of the existing parties by offering ministerial seats to partymen selected for their personal merit. A partyman nowadays, therefore, finds himself confronted with the choice of either enlisting himself under the rightist banner as a member of the reconstructed party or lose his all from devotion to the cause of party government. The safest conjecture is that the Japanese political world will in the near future be parcelled out into three groups: (1) the conservative party formed of sections of the Minseito and the Seiyukai with conservative inclinations, (2) the reformist party embracing sections of the two parties above named and other parties which advocate reforms in the present party system, and (3) the proletariat party. That the reformist party, if ever it appears on the stage at all, will become the largest and most powerful of the three, is the conclusion to which the dearth of talent and ability in the existing parties necessarily compels us.



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